

-- REMARKS --

The present amendment replies to an Office Action dated May 21, 2008. Claims 1-24 are pending in the present application. Claims 1, 3, 12, 14, and 20 have been amended and claims 2 and 13 canceled herein. In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1, 2, 5-13, 15-21, 23, and 24 on various grounds and objected to but found allowable claims 3, 4, 14, and 22 if rewritten in independent form. The Applicants respond to each ground of rejection as subsequently recited herein and requests reconsideration of the present application.

35 U.S.C. §103 Rejections

Obviousness is a question of law, based on the factual inquiries of 1) determining the scope and content of the prior art; 2) ascertaining the differences between the claimed invention and the prior art; and 3) resolving the level of ordinary skill in the pertinent art. *Graham v. John Deere Co.*, 383 U.S. 1, 148 USPQ 459 (1966). To establish *prima facie* obviousness of a claimed invention, all the claim limitations must be taught or suggested by the prior art. *In re Royka*, 490 F.2d 981, 180 USPQ 580 (CCPA 1974). See MPEP 2143.03. The Applicants respectfully assert that the cited references fail to teach or suggest all the claim limitations.

A. Claims 1, 2, 5-13, 15-21, 23, and 24 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,701,059 to Steigerwald, *et al.* (the *Steigerwald* patent).

The Applicants respectfully assert that the *Steigerwald* patent fails to disclose, teach, or suggest:

A fluorescent lamp circuit including an end-of-life detection circuit coupled to the first and second fluorescent lamps, as recited in independent claim 1;

A method of reducing striations in a fluorescent lighting system including sensing a voltage change in the fluorescent lighting circuit indicative of a fluorescent tube end-of-life condition wherein an end-of-life detection circuit is coupled to the first and second fluorescent lamps, as recited in independent claim 12; or

A system for reducing striations in a multi-tube fluorescent lamp assembly including means for sensing a voltage change in the fluorescent lighting circuit indicative of a fluorescent tube end-of-life condition wherein an end-of-life detection circuit is coupled to the first and second fluorescent lamps, as recited in independent claim 20.

At most, the *Steigerwald* patent discloses a resistor R3 provided as a current sensor for controlling the lamp dimming function in a manner well-known in the art. *See* column 3, lines 34-36. The *Steigerwald* patent fails to include anything related to a fluorescent tube end-of-life condition and so fails to disclose an end-of-life circuit as claimed.

Claims 5-11; claims 15-19 and 23; and claims 21 and 24 depend directly or indirectly from independent claims 1, 12, and 20, respectively, and so include all the elements and limitations of their respective independent claims. The Applicants therefore respectfully submit that the dependent claims are allowable over the *Steigerwald* patent for at least the same reasons as set forth above for their respective independent claims.

Withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1, 5-12, 15-21, 23, and 24 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over the *Steigerwald* patent is respectfully requested.

SUMMARY

Reconsideration of the rejection of claims 1, 5-12, 15-21, 23, and 24 is requested. The Applicants respectfully submit that claims 1, 3-12, and 14-24 fully satisfy the requirements of 35 U.S.C. §§102, 103 and 112. In view of the foregoing, favorable consideration and early passage to issue of the present application is respectfully requested.

Dated: **August 12, 2008**

Respectfully submitted,
S. VENKITASUBRAHMANIAN, *et al.*

PHILIPS INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY
& STANDARDS
P.O. Box 3001
Briarcliff Manor, New York 10510

Robert J. Kraus
Registration No. 26,358
Attorney for Applicant

CARDINAL LAW GROUP
Suite 2000
1603 Orrington Avenue
Evanston, Illinois 60201
Phone: (847) 905-7111
Fax: (847) 905-7113

/FRANK C. NICHOLAS/
Frank C. Nicholas
Registration No. 33,983
Attorney for Applicant